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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004634

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SUBJECT: AL-ANBAR PRT: RAMADI POLICE RECRUITS SEEK JOB
SECURITY WHILE CRITICIZING TERRORISTS

Classified By: Al-Anbar PRT Leader James Soriano for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Over 200 Anbari men from Ramadi and surrounding towns turned out on December 17 for the first day of a three-day recruiting drive for the Iraqi police forces. Many applicants cited job security as the main motivation for their interest in joining the Iraqi police. While they were anxious about being the target of terrorist attacks, they criticized terrorists for disrupting normal economic life in Ramadi. Over the course of the three-day recruiting drive, approximately 390 men passed the required tests and were sent to Jordan for additional training. The large number of men responding to recent police recruiting drives in al-Anbar is a significant step towards staffing the province's police forces. While there were virtually no police officers on the payroll in al-Anbar 24 months ago, and only 1,000 a year ago, there are now over 8,000 officers signed up with the province's police forces. END SUMMARY.

POLICE RECRUITS: YOUNG ANBARIS SEEK JOB SECURITY, RESPECT

¶2. (C) Braving rain and chilly winds, over 200 Anbari men underwent interviews including physical, literacy and health checks on December 17 hoping to become the newest members of the Iraqi police (IP). Some of the men, who appeared to be between the ages of 18 and 35, waited nearly eight hours to complete the process. They were asked questions about their health, ability to read and write, drug use, and views about the Ba'ath Party and terrorism. Those who pass the tests are accepted for further training, including at a police academy in Jordan, the next step in the process of becoming an Iraqi police officer. Over the course of the three-day recruiting drive, approximately 390 men passed the required tests and were sent to Jordan for additional training.

¶3. (C) Many applicants cited job security as their primary motivation. "Right now, there are not many jobs in Ramadi," one recruit stated. "This is a good job and it pays good money. I need this job," he added. A 22-year-old applicant from Ramadi also noted high unemployment in the area, while adding that young men with a guaranteed income stood a better chance of getting married. "You can't get married without a job. So I hope I can get married if I am successful at this test," he concluded. "My father is dead and my brothers and sisters are little, so I need money to help them," another applicant stated.

¶4. (C) Several applicants discussed the status given to men in police and arQ uniforms in their communities. Two young brothers said that their father serves with the Iraqi police, and they admire the respect he receives from family members as a policeman. While many of the young men wore athletic clothes and running shoes, the two brothers were dressed formally and wore dress shoes. "This is an important job, so we have to dress well for the interview," the older brother explained.

RECRUITS WORRY ABOUT THEIR SAFETY...

¶5. (C) Nearly all applicants were concerned about their safety. "The terrorists will kill anyone with the police or the army, they are very bad," one man said. "Danger" was the word most frequently used by applicants in describing police work. Many cited their faith in God as their best defense against the terrorists. "Everything is decided by God, and we are Muslim," one recruit declared.

...WHILE HARSHLY CRITICIZING TERRORISTS

¶6. (C) The applicants criticized terrorists for disrupting employment and daily life in Ramadi. "Why are there no jobs in Ramadi? It is because of the terrorists (and) the security situation," one applicant said. One man stated that he and his friends have difficulty keeping in contact due to the absence of telephone service in al-Anbar. "We all have mobile phones, but

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they don't work here. The terrorists destroy the phone towers," he said. "It used to be safe here," he added, "but now (the terrorists) will kill you. It doesn't matter if you look Iraqi or if you are Muslim. They kill everyone who is not with them.?"

SECTARIAN DIVIDE EVIDENT AT RECRUITING DRIVE

¶7. (C) Many of the Iraqi interviewers were from southern Iraq, and the gulf between them and the Anbari applicants was evident. Some of the interviewers and applicants noted a sectarian divide as well, noting that the Anbaris are mostly Sunni while many southerners are Shi'a. A 22-year-old Shi'a Iraqi soldier from Babylon who was used as an interpreter stated: "Most of us in the army here are from the south. The people here hate us. I am scared. The people here are crazy." Many applicants expressed their distrust of Shi'a Muslims in general. One applicant said that the Shi'a politicians in Baghdad "hate" the Sunnis of Anbar. "If we go to Baghdad, they will kill us. Moqtada al-Sadr, the Shi'a militias, they are all terrorists," his friend added.

¶8. (C) At a December 11 meeting of the al-Anbar Provincial Council in Baghdad, several council members expressed concern that Anbari police recruits were being rejected during recruiting drives by Shi'a interviewers who were administering the literacy test. However, the interviewers we spoke with praised the police recruits as important to the future of Iraq, and stressed that the majority of them have passed the literacy test. At one point during the interview process, an American administrator cautioned the interviewers not to be too lenient on the literacy test. One interviewer told us that two-thirds of the applicants on December 17 passed the literacy test.

19. (C) COMMENT. The large turnout of potential police recruits over the past few months in Ramadi marks a significant increase in recruitment efforts for police officers in al-Anbar province. Recruitment was at zero as recently as last summer, but police recruiting drives this fall and winter have drawn hundreds of Anbari men. There were virtually no police officers on the payroll in al-Anbar 24 months ago and only about 1,000 one year ago, but today there are over 8,000. While the ceiling for the number of Anbari police officers is 11,300 officers and the March 31, 2007 target date of reaching that quota still looks unlikely, the increasing number of recruits represents steady progress towards the goal of staffing the province's police forces. Today every city in al-Anbar province has a police detachment except the desert oasis town of Rutbah. END COMMENT.

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